

THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT

THE OFFICIAL JOURNAL OF THE
ASSOCIATION OF ASSISTANT LIBRARIANS
(*Section of the Library Association*)

Vol. XXXIX

JULY—AUGUST, 1946

No. 4

HON. EDITOR : S. C. HOLLIDAY

Hackney Public Libraries

Editorial

THE *Assistant* has urgent need of high-quality contributions on matters of professional interest. Brisk articles of about 1,200 words are especially sought, for neither great length nor excessive verbiage is desirable in a publication primarily addressed to younger librarians.

The present transitional period, with its distinct tendency towards far higher standards of professional ability and public service (clearly recognizable in the general upgrading of salaries and in the healthy sign of specialization) would appear to offer to intending contributors a wealth of material for comment and discussion. In one subject alone—classification—recent scientific, industrial and political developments have rendered completely useless schedules of schemes which already by 1939 were strangely contorted to embrace knowledge then extant. Here, the lead in reform, redrafting or development of completely new schemes must come from the younger men and women, especially those, perhaps, who in the last six years have been actively associated in the use of knowledge and new materials which leave their seniors breathless and bewildered. It is singularly hopeless to expect older librarians, harassed by wartime restrictions, exhausted by lack of competent assistance, and ignorant for the most part of precise knowledge of the new scientific and technical achievements, to estimate with confidence even the most immediate future significance of—for example—centimeter radar, Mach numbers, or fission of radioactive isotopes.

Topics for discussion are indeed innumerable. The last word has not been said on book selection or on the education and conditions of staff, while bibliographical research is a field of knowledge but faintly disturbed by a few pioneers. The Hon. Editor will be glad to discuss with any intending contributor the nature and scope of the subject upon which it is proposed to write.

The Hon. Education Secretary reports an amendment to "Council Notes" in last month's *Assistant*. 466 applications for Correspondence Courses were accepted, and 100 were refused owing to lack of Tutors. A special appeal for more Tutors appears in another page of this issue.

The Library Assistant Annual General Meeting

THE 51st Annual General Meeting of the A.A.L. will be held at Nottingham on Thursday, 25th July, 1946.

PROGRAMME

- 11 a.m. – 12.45 p.m. Assemble at University College, Highfields, Nottingham, and inspect the College Library.
- 12.45 p.m. Lunch in the College Refectory (price 2/- each).
- 1.45 p.m. Leave by bus for Newstead Abbey, calling at Apsley Branch Library.
- 2.30 p.m. Arrive at Newstead Abbey, and view the collections, including the Roe-Byron Collection.
- 3.30 p.m. Leave Newstead Abbey.
- 4.0 p.m. Arrive at the Council House, Nottingham, where members will be received by The Worshipful the Lord Mayor (Alderman E. G. Underwood, J.P.), the Sheriff of Nottingham (Councillor T. R. Scott), and the Chairman (Councillor J. A. Shaw) and members of the Libraries and Museum Committee.
- 4.15 p.m. Tea, by invitation of the Public Libraries and Museum Committee.
- 5.0 p.m. Proceed to Guildhall.
- 5.15 p.m. Annual General Meeting in the Grand Jury Room, Nottingham Guildhall.

After the Annual General Meeting members may, if they wish, see either (a) the Nottingham Central Library, or (b) the County Library Headquarters.

Members are asked to note that the above announcement contains programme details only. The full notice of the Annual General Meeting was published in *The Library Association Record* for June, to which members should refer.

Council Notes

THE third Council Meeting of the 51st Session was held at Chaucer House on 29th May, the President (Mr. J. T. Gillett) in the Chair.

As no other nominations had been received for the office of Hon. Editor, it was resolved that Mr. S. C. Holliday be elected for the remainder of the current year.

Final details of the 1946 Annual General Meeting were announced. These were published in the June *Library Association Record*, and members are asked to refer to the details given there, and to give their support to the extremely interesting programme arranged for 25th July. The Council agreed to defray from its funds the cost of transport required to convey the members at this Meeting to the various places to be visited.

The Library Assistant

Arising from a request for information as to the propriety of paying out of Divisional funds the expenses or part expenses of junior members attending Divisional Meetings, the following resolution was passed: "The Council directs that payments shall not be made out of Divisional funds for the purpose of defraying expenses incurred in attending Divisional Meetings, unless such expenses are incurred by a member attending a meeting as a delegate of a Divisional Committee."

It was agreed provisionally to adopt the following recommendations of the Sub-Committee on Divisional Areas regarding the adjustment of such areas and the creation of a new Division:—

N. E. Division:

Take in Westmorland, and then form Sub-Division (A.A.L. Rule 8c) comprising Westmorland and Cumberland.

This would not call for any increased representation on the Council.

East Midland Division:

Add Rutland and the WHOLE of Cambridgeshire.

Remove that part of Derbyshire north of line Buxton to Dronfield (including Buxton and Dronfield themselves) to N.W. Division.

N.W. Division:

Add that part of Derbyshire north of line Buxton to Dronfield (including Buxton and Dronfield themselves) from East Midland Division; North Wales.

Greater London Division:

Take in Bedfordshire, Berkshire and Buckinghamshire.

Devon and Cornwall:

Take in that part of Somerset west of line Bridgwater to Chard (including Bridgwater and Chard themselves).

Midland Division:

Remove Gloucestershire (to new Division).

Take in Oxfordshire.

Wessex Division:

Remove that part of Wiltshire north of line Trowbridge to Swindon (including Trowbridge and Swindon themselves) to new Division.

New Division:

That part of Somerset east of line Bridgwater to Chard (excluding Bridgwater and Chard themselves), and that part of Wiltshire north of line Trowbridge to Swindon (including Trowbridge and Swindon themselves)—from Wessex Division; the county of Gloucestershire—from Midland Division.

(The creation of this Division to be subject to evidence of a demand for the creation of the Division in the area itself.)

Members are asked to send their views on the proposed alterations to their Divisional Secretary, who will forward these views to the Honorary Secretary. The Council's adoption of the changes will be subject to any further adjustment found necessary as a result of these opinions.

The Library Assistant

A recommendation from the East Midland Division that the A.A.L. should issue a pamphlet setting out the achievements and the benefits of the Association was referred to the next meeting of the Press and Publications Committee.

Motions from the Wessex Division and the East Midland Division concerning Divisional finance, were withdrawn by the representatives of those Divisions on the assurance that the whole question of Divisional payments will shortly be reconsidered.

A.A.L. Correspondence Courses

The Education Committee of the A.A.L. very much regret that owing to the lack of a sufficient number of Tutors, it was necessary for the Hon. Education Secretary to refuse nearly 100 applications for Courses in the session which commenced in April, 1946.

A special appeal is made to those members who are suitably qualified and interested in this work, to make application to join our panel of Tutors. There are vacancies in a number of sections for the session commencing next November, and anyone interested is asked to contact their Divisional Hon. Secretary as soon as possible.

Correspondence Courses in the sections mentioned below will be arranged to run from April to June of the following year, and from November to December of the following year.

The courses, conducted under the auspices of the A.A.L. (Section of the L.A.), comprise ten monthly lessons, consisting of a prescribed selection of technical reading, hints and advice on study and practical work, and questions or subjects for essays upon which the tutor will write comments or corrections.

The subjects treated and the respective fees are as set out below :—

Entrance Examination.—The course covers the whole of the L.A. requirements for this examination. Fee, £2 0s. 0d.

Registration Examination.—Group (a) (i) Classification—Fee, £1 5s. 0d. ; (ii) Cataloguing—Fee, £1 5s. 0d. Group (b) (iii) and (iv) Bibliography and Assistance to Readers in the choice of books—Fee, £2 0s. 0d. Group (c) (v) Library Organization and Administration—Fee, £1 5s. 0d. ; (vi) History of English Literature—Fee, £1 5s. 0d.

Final Examination.—Part 1, Bibliography and Book Selection—Fee, £1 10s. 0d. Part 2, Library Organization and General Librarianship—Fee, £1 10s. 0d. Part 3, Library Routine and Administration : (a) Public Libraries—Fee, £1 10s. 0d. ; (b) University and College Libraries—Fee, £1 10s. 0d. Part 4, Literary Criticism and Appreciation : (a) Modern Literature—Fee, £1 10s. 0d. Part 5, Specialist Certificates : (c) Advanced Classification—Fee, £1 5s. 0d. ; Advanced Cataloguing—Fee, £1 5s. 0d. (d) Historical Bibliography—Fee, £1 10s. 0d.

It is anticipated that, from November, 1946, the A.A.L. will be able to offer a limited number of Courses covering the following section of the Final examinations : Part 3 (c) Special Libraries and Information Bureaux—Fee, £1 10s. 0d.

The Library Assistant

Both full courses and short revision courses in Classification and Cataloguing, based on the old syllabus, are still available for those members who wish to complete their Intermediate Examination, having already passed one part by December, 1945. Fees for these courses remain at £1 6s. 6d. per subject.

Non-members of the Library Association are charged double fees.

Students wishing to enter for a course must obtain an application form and send it, together with the necessary fee, to Mrs. S. W. Martin, Carnegie Library, Herne Hill Road, London, S.E.24. Applications must reach the above before 20th March and 20th October for the April and November courses, respectively, and before 20th February and 20th August for the revision courses. After these dates no application will be considered.

Important.—*Before entering for a course, students are particularly advised to make themselves familiar with the regulations governing the examination, as printed in the "Library Association Year Book." Any queries concerning the examinations or the syllabus should be sent direct to the Library Association and not to the Association of Assistant Librarians.*

Students should note that the revised and enlarged edition of Phillips "A Primer of Book Classification" is now published. It is to be obtained direct from the Hon. Education Secretary at the Carnegie Library, Herne Hill Road, London, S.E. 24. The new edition of this essential text-book is not large, and intending purchasers should place their orders as soon as possible. The price is 6s. to members, and 7s. to non-members.

Home Thoughts For Abroad

S. J. Butcher

THE return of the serving librarian marks to each individual the end of an era and with it comes a form of professional stocktaking that is not entirely personal. To assist in the adjustment to changed conditions the prodigal has probably attained a wider vision, a firmer faith in the purpose of librarianship and a knowledge of libraries in other countries. On the debit side the loss of his "stock-in-trade" and the gap in experience are the chief obstacles to speedy rehabilitation. He can, however, approach the problems of the day with less likelihood of prejudgment without examination.

One had read of the increased use of libraries during the war but the full measure of the increase does not appear to the serving librarian until he resumes his civil occupation. That our colleagues remaining in the profession have achieved an outstanding advance is generally agreed, but when one considers that this increase has been attained with reduced book funds, shortage of staff and under the strain and difficulties of war-time conditions, their effort is remarkable and worthy of the highest commendation. Of the nature and reality of the increased use of libraries there is ample proof, but the cause is not so evident. Is it due to the reduced facilities of other educational institutions? Is it the harvest of the increased book funds of the late 1930's, or the reaction of the

The Library Assistant

people to the need of knowledge for post-war development? Whatever the contributory causes, the result can only be the citizens' need and realization of the value of the public library. This is a testing time for the library movement and it has occurred when we are not fully equipped to meet the demand. Many of our libraries have been damaged or destroyed and are not likely to be rebuilt for four or five years; our book stocks are stunted and worn and our staffs are in the process of recovery from the deprivations of war. It may not be enough to exploit our present resources to the full. Some reform in government and administration may be required.

After the enthusiasm that greeted the McColvin report and the Library Association Proposals, it is with surprise that the returned librarian finds little revision or alteration in the government of public libraries. Even more surprising is the apparent passive reaction of the profession in general to the Minister of Education's postponement of any definite action, particularly when one reads in another journal of a proposed readjustment of London's local government. During the early years of the war one of the standard arguments raised in connection with the "Proposals" was that other local government services would not fit into a grouping of areas designed for library purposes. Now it appears that other local government services are making their own plans for amalgamating certain areas. Are we to join in or to brood over our plans in splendid but unfruitful isolation? Are our plans to be "distilled to jelly" by one ministerial blessing? In any case it would be interesting to learn of the strength and standing of the library movement on the committee planning the re-modelling of London's local government.

During the past year the question of change in administrative organizations has become almost national in importance. One section believes that small organizations joined together into large administrative units, must lead to increased efficiency and economy. Others hold that large units become ponderous in execution, make heavy demands on the relatively scarce commodity of skilled administrators and tend to become over-burdened with "red-tape" and paper work. It is a question that requires very careful consideration by librarians. Since the Minister of Education's statement offers little hope of national action in the near future, it is for consideration that we must consult with our colleagues in other departments of local government service to attain any revision of areas. The national road is apparently "Closed for repairs." The time has come to seek an alternative route to our goal through co-operation with other services. One thing is certain—unless we take action we shall be swept along in the backwash of the plans of other departments.

It is in the administration of libraries themselves that changes can be seen. The rise in the number of lost books and periodicals is one of the alarming trends that greets the librarian returning from the forces. The Reading Room is a shadow of its former self and service difficulties have been increased by removing periodicals to the staff enclosure. Valuable technical works disappear from both the Lending and Reference libraries with astonishing regularity. Some Reference libraries have a large proportion of their stock under glass in locked cases. It is difficult to analyze the cause of these losses that strike at the very heart of our organization. It can only be hoped that this is a temporary phase due to the shortage of books and periodicals. American librarians have given a good deal of attention to this problem. Some have gone so far as to institute cloakrooms for coats, cases and baskets. It is reported that

The Library Assistant

one of our large provincial libraries has recently engaged a detective to apprehend book-thieves. These measures are alien to British character and climate, but it is a strange paradox that the American librarians, the pioneers of open-access should find it necessary to specialize on the Subject Department and place an assistant between the borrower and the book. It is, perhaps, on these lines that the menace of the book thief can be combated. The readers' adviser will be more helpful and effective than the semi-open access practised by some of our Reference libraries to-day.

Reading Rooms have become the problem department of many libraries. Considered wasteful and undesirable by some members of the profession, there is no escaping one salient factor: the department is popular with the public. Many suggestions have been made to divorce ourselves from the Reading Room, but general policy seems to be to kill it by neglect.

The battle over professional education which we followed so eagerly as exiles, has been fought and the concessions made appear to have robbed the controversy of its personal and "news" interest. An impression gathered, is that the lack of understanding regarding the revised syllabus is not entirely confined to members serving abroad. Our colleagues at home seem to be equally "in the dark" regarding professional matters. It would help if fuller reports of deliberations at Headquarters could be passed on to the rank and file member.

Librarians serving abroad seem to experience this lack of information more than their colleagues serving at home. It takes three months for a copy of *The Library Association Record* to reach the South East Asia Command area. Appointments advertised are often filled months before the serving member receives his copy, and controversies are concluded before he can voice an opinion. To send professional journals by air mail is a necessity not an amenity. The exile is also greatly handicapped by the recent decision of the L.A. and A.A.L., not to send text-books overseas. It is difficult for members to attempt any preliminary study for examinations without these text-books, which are even more scarce abroad than in England. To discriminate against a member serving abroad seems to be an unreasonable hardship. With the co-operation of the services whatever difficulties exist should not be insurmountable, but once again time is the ruling factor. The serving member needs this help now—not in six months' time.



Apparatus for Culture

J. F. W. Bryon

ENGLISHMEN and Americans who "go in for that sort of thing" are inclined to make a cult of culture, to adopt and assume it. They form fashions in it, and that is a damning thing, because fashion is only possible in unessentials. Accepting Matthew Arnold's definition of "acquainting ourselves with the best that has been known and said in the world," they pursue culture avidly, with the conviction that having read the hundred best books, seen the hundred best paintings and heard the hundred best symphonies, God will "make it click," and they will be cultured. "But culture cannot be absorbed from text-books or out of the treasures pillaged from

The Library Assistant

great cities. It implies centuries of effort." (Le Corbusier.) "Cultures," to quote the same authority, "are based on personal effort, on ingestion and digestion. Culture manifests itself, in a full realization of the equipment at our disposal, by choice, by classification, and by evolution, in a feeling of things which are rooted in profound acquired bases. Culture is an orthogonal state of mind."

Related to librarianship, this means that our duty is to provide reading matter which will enable a student or worker or general reader to specialize, yet maintain a correct perspective. To this, all our tentative groping towards a balanced stock tends, but the sense of proportion, the eye in focus, must be ours as well. Statistics are not enough. They are dangerous, inasmuch as they lead to too easy a grasp of problems, to a bird's-eye view which ignores complexities and peculiar conditions.

Statistics are also inexorable. They help to formulate the problem and foreshadow future action. In our programme for libraries we are inclined to accept the traditional. Convention makes cowards of us all; but necessity creates precedents, and in the light of the need revealed in statistics, we must be prepared to sacrifice some cherished fetishes in order to gain new vision.

To discover needs and service shortcomings, I do not propose that we should Gallup roughshod over the notorious English reticence. But in our own systems it would be as well if we submitted to impartial scrutiny by a disinterested observer. This "library survey" is found very effective in America, and frequently indicates beams in the eyes so quick to discern motes in our neighbours. Annual reports should be in the nature of confessions, not "win-ads." It would appear from many of these that we still have the attitude enforced by early conditions of striving to convince a reluctant committee, council, and public of the usefulness of our service. Our efforts should be to improve quality rather than quantity, for thus only will we prove our case for expansion and increased expenditure. Few sound council members can be induced to enthusiasm over a prospect of increased fiction issues. But show how much we are helping education, health, commerce and industry in the district and they may be more amenable to reason.

The library is a community tool. If kept efficient by correct use, frequent overhaul and regular servicing, it will prove its utility and need no advertisement addressed to the purchaser. Changing the metaphor, the library is a corporate body. In sickness and in health the service exists, vitality being evident through the circulation. Periodically, a thorough examination by an expert diagnostician should be made, and conclusions translated into remedial action, by stimulants, exercise in neglected limbs, or dieting of such parts affected by excess, which causes a premature hardening of the arteries.

Increased demands must be met with increased provision, and will only result where anticipatory action makes their satisfaction possible. In places where *laissez-faire* stultifies growth, no new demands may be expected, and it will be the fault, not of the public, but of the librarian.

Many roads open vistas to the reader. It is our duty to ensure that the library does not become a cul-de-sac of culture, but an important stretch of the main highway, metalled and broad, a vital artery in the journey to the fuller life.

The Library Assistant

Divisional Notes and News

D*IVISIONAL Hon. Secretaries are requested kindly to render reports of meetings as soon as possible after their occurrence. It is believed that the activities of several Divisions are not being made known to the Assistant; and while it must be at least disheartening to members addressing meetings to find their papers unrecorded, those members who do not attend meetings are led to the belief that no Divisional activities are taking place.*

DEVON AND CORNWALL

The Annual General Meeting of the Division was held on the 9th January at Plymouth Central Library, by kind permission of the Librarian, Mr. F. C. Cole. Following the business meeting, at which the annual report was read, members enjoyed an excellent tea provided by Mr. Cole. A talk was then given on "Shakespeare," by Dr. Andrew Scotland, Director of Education for Plymouth. Dr. Scotland's enthusiasm for his subject was admirably conveyed to his audience, and his aptness of quotation was appreciated by all members. The speaker attacked the theories of the Baconians, and drew attention to Shakespeare's worth as a poet dramatizing the great national resurgence of Elizabethan times.

It is to be regretted that the date of the meeting prevented the attendance of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman among other members of the Division. Mr. Cole kindly deputized for the Chairman.

NORTH-WESTERN

The Spring meeting of the Liverpool and District Branch, held on the 21st March, at St. Helens, attracted over 80 members and friends. The meeting was held in the Town Hall, by invitation of the St. Helens' Libraries Committee, who, in addition, kindly provided the refreshments.

The programme, which consisted of papers by members recently returned from war service, was preceded by an address of welcome by the Mayor of St. Helens.

Mr. T. E. Headon (Liverpool Public Libraries) gave the first paper, entitled "Books for the Rhine Army." It was a short account of the work of the Army Bureau of Current Affairs and of his own experiences as travelling librarian to the 21st Army Group in Germany. The second paper, by Mr. E. Smith (Bootle Public Libraries), called "Glimpses ashore," was a description of the many libraries visited by him, whilst serving in the Royal Navy. The libraries included many on the eastern seaboard of the United States as well as some on the continent. The last paper, "An Abyssinian note-book," by Mr. H. S. Brown (Liverpool Public Libraries), provided a complete contrast to the first two in that the speaker made no reference to either libraries or books, but concentrated, instead, on giving a moving description of medical relief work in Abyssinia, as experienced by himself as a member of the Friends Ambulance Unit. All three papers proved very interesting and were very well received by the audience.

Mr. R. Bioletti (Liverpool Public Libraries) was in the chair. Votes of thanks were recorded as follows:—to the Mayor of St. Helens by Mr. J. T. Evans (Deputy Chief Librarian, Liverpool P.L.); to the St. Helens' Libraries Committee and the speakers by Mr. E. Jones (Birkenhead Public Libraries), seconded by Mr. F. Hope (Liverpool P.L.). Both votes were carried unanimously and loudly applauded. In arranging the meeting the Branch Committee enjoyed the complete co-operation of Mr. H. H. Edwards, the Chief Librarian of St. Helens.

The Library Assistant

WESSEX

The Wessex Division of the Association of Assistant Librarians met at University College, Southampton, on Wednesday, 20th March; Mr. E. Cave, F.L.A. (Southampton) in the chair. 30 members were present, together with 34 service personnel who were attending a Pre-Vocational Training Course for Teachers.

Members foregathered in the University Library where they were able to view an Exhibition of the English Bible, kindly loaned by R. E. Ford, Esq.

Mr. Edward Sydney, M.C., F.L.A. gave a paper on "The Library and the Community." He dealt briefly with four aspects of the problem:—

1. The professional attitude towards the community as evinced by the lack of records of investigation and research by the profession into prevailing social conditions and their effect on the use of books; the too narrow concentration of professional training on matters of library technique and bibliography, and the general disinclination of the profession to regard the service as a social instrument as well as a personal, intellectual, cultural or vocational opportunity.

2. The changing community and its needs of the service requiring the widening of our interpretation of purpose, and a reconsideration of the emphasis placed on certain traditional aspects, e.g., newsroom.

3. The public librarian and the new situation in adult education likely to arise from the operation of the 1944 Education Act; and also as a result of Forces Education Schemes; and the inevitable surge forward of general public social awareness as a result of the war and reconstruction.

4. The right of the library service to exist as a separate and distinct social service not limited in its operation by the policy of any other service, nor restricted by its regulations.

Tea was taken in the University Refectory, followed by a vigorous discussion. Topics raised, both by members and by service personnel, included the creation of a separate Government Department for Public Library affairs, publicity methods, liaison with schools, and work with local societies.

A vote of thanks to the speaker was moved by Miss J. G. Rackham (Southampton), and the Chairman thanked Miss M. I. Henderson, M.A. (Librarian, University College, Southampton), the Library Committee, and the University Authorities.

The Division also held a most enjoyable meeting at the Salisbury Public Library on Wednesday, 22nd May.

Members were welcomed by Councillor R. G. Gordon, C.I.E., Vice-Chairman of the Salisbury Library Committee, who spoke of the wide social opportunities of library work and the part that libraries would play in Youth and Community Centres.

The Chairman, Miss K. R. Bennett, F.L.A. (Portsmouth), then introduced the guest speaker—Miss Christina Foyle, of the well-known London bookselling firm. Miss Foyle gave a most informative, yet witty and entertaining, talk. Admitting that this was the first time that she had spoken to a group of librarians, she said that she felt that librarians were very good friends of the booksellers in that they encouraged reading.

Miss Foyle dealt at some length with the present-day shortage of books. She attributed this partly to an increase in the reading habit during the war years, but also due to the paper rationing and the general printing and binding difficulties which exist today.

The Library Assistant

She stated that her firm were once without a Bible or collected edition of Shakespeare in their stock of some three million books.

Miss Foyle's talk was interspersed with many anecdotes of her bookselling experiences and she concluded by mentioning the increased demand for British authors in countries such as Russia and Turkey.

A lively discussion ensued, followed by a vote of thanks to Miss Foyle by Mr. E. Cave, F.L.A. (Southampton).

Members were then entertained to Tea by Councillor H. E. Randall, Chairman of the Salisbury Library Committee.

After Tea, Mr. William Hughes, Chief Librarian of Salisbury—who is a brilliant caricaturist—gave an exhibition of his work.

The meeting closed with a most hearty vote of thanks to Councillors H. E. Randall and R. G. Gordon and the Salisbury Library Committee and to Mr. Hughes, proposed by Mr. A. L. Carver, A.L.A. (Portsmouth).

The Northern Counties Branch of the Library Association wishes it to be known that the branch has recently been resuscitated, and is planning several meetings during the coming year. All members of the Library Association in the counties of Northumberland, Durham, Cumberland, Westmorland and the North Riding of Yorkshire are eligible for membership, and should send in their names to the Secretary. Persons who are not employed by a recognized library and are not members of the Library Association may, on the recommendation of the Committee, and on payment of 5s. per annum, be elected as "local members." The Hon. Secretary is Mr. H. A. Bilton, F.L.A., Public Libraries, Newcastle upon Tyne, to whom enquiries should be addressed.



Books of Switzerland

An exhibition of Swiss books, arranged under the auspices of the British Council, was held in London from 26th April to 25th May. After leaving London, the Exhibition is making a tour of the major provincial cities.

Readers will doubtless have seen the warm praises given to the Exhibition in the press, and they are urged to visit it not merely for professional purposes but for their own private delight. After the dismal and often illegible productions forced upon us at home by wartime expediency, the books, maps and journals in the Exhibition are refreshment to the spirit and relief to the sight. Good paper, fine typography, and casings designed and lettered with craftsmanship are outstanding features even in the cheaper works.

Most of the books in the Historical Section of the Exhibition have been loaned by the Swiss National Library. They include a number of translations from British authors, especially of the 18th century, of which time it was said of one Swiss city: "Men spoke and wrote in French, but read and thought in English."¹ In this section may be seen the first translation into German of Shakespeare, and—naturally—Gibbon is here also.

¹ Sismondi, quoted from the catalogue: "Swiss books through five centuries."

The Library Assistant

The contemporary books are, however, those by which the Exhibition will be judged, and it is these which have aroused admiration and not a little envy. It is no slur upon the general excellence to say that the visitor will be drawn principally by the works on architecture and the fine arts, the magnificent maps, and above all, perhaps, by the books for children. If there is anything in the theory that children may be influenced by things of beauty, then Swiss publishers are implanting into the infants of their country a remarkable standard of fine taste.

The writer's predilections brought him again and again before the "Editiones Helveticae"—beautiful little editions of standard foreign classics. Only the nearby presence of the Minister of Education, Miss Ellen Wilkinson (who opened the Exhibition) and the Swiss Chargé d'Affaires prevented covetousness outrunning discretion.

Two catalogues have been prepared for the Exhibition: "Swiss books through five centuries," (covering the Historical Section); and "Books of Switzerland," which enumerates the contemporary works. The latter contains an essay by Dr. Martin Hürlimann which students would do well to absorb. Both catalogues should find a place on the shelves of British libraries.

Courses in Librarianship

The Spring Grove Polytechnic, London Road, Isleworth; Middlesex, announces that new courses for session 1946-47 will open on 23rd September, 1946. The timetable is as follows:—

Entrance Examination:

Elementary Cataloguing, Classification and Administration. Reference Material and Choice of Books. Mr. H. Groom, F.L.A. Wednesdays, 2-4 p.m.

Current English Literature. Mr. W. Lineham, M.A. Wednesdays, 4-5 p.m.

Registration Examination:

Classification and Cataloguing. Mr. A. J. Ward, F.L.A. Fridays, 2.30-4.30 p.m.

Choice of Books. Mr. H. Groom, F.L.A. Wednesdays, 7.45-8.45 p.m.

History of English Literature. Mr. W. Lineham, M.A. Wednesdays, 5-6 p.m.

Bibliography. Mr. S. T. Butcher, F.L.A. Wednesdays, 6-7.30 p.m.

Library Organisation and Administration. Mr. A. J. Ward, F.L.A. Thursdays 6-7.30 p.m.

Final Examination:

Library Organisation. Mr. A. J. Ward, F.L.A. Thursdays, 7.30-9 p.m.

Historical Bibliography. Wednesdays, 6.30-7.30 p.m.; and Library Work with Young People. Wednesdays, 5.30-6.30 p.m. Miss J. M. Silvester, F.L.A.

Bibliography. Mr. S. T. Butcher, F.L.A. Wednesdays, 7.30-9 p.m.

Library Routine and Administration for Special Libraries and Information Bureaux; and Literary Criticism and Appreciation (d) The Literature of Science and Technology. Various lectures by arrangement with ASLIB Fridays, 7-9 p.m.

The hours of classes in advanced subjects may be modified in special cases.

Correspondence

The Editor, *The Library Assistant*.

Sir,—

If there is any truth in the proverb that "a man who is only a librarian is not even a librarian," supporting, as it does, the admirable Presidential address of Mr. Cashmore, then hundreds of ex-service members of The Library Association will never become worthy of their profession.

For, with the defeat of Mr. Swift's proposals, they must all (with few exceptions) qualify under the new syllabus.

There is no quarrel with the new syllabus, or with the new system of training. Both will do much to raise the status of our profession; but unfortunately, the staff position and the arrears of work make the release of personnel for full-time courses difficult and unlikely. The new syllabus without the new training is a hardship.

Based, as each part of the examination is, on one year's full-time study, the unqualified assistant is faced with at least six years' part-time study. What time will be available for that wider reading and that social contact which the "Post-war Proposals" demand of the librarian?

The Association has formulated an excellent scheme. Its success will be judged, not by the percentage of students who qualify, but by the percentage of ex-service assistants (and later civilians) who are able to attend the Schools.

Yours etc.,

S. T. DIBNAH.

The Editor, *The Library Assistant*.

Sir,—

What, may I ask, is "a bibliothecal guru" (page 43 of the May-June *Assistant*)? The alleged adjective I recognize as bar sinister Franco-American, though for the life of me I've never known what it meant. But "guru," and "bibliothecal guru"! I am moved slightly to amend a remark once made by Humphrey Wanley (Librarian of the Harleian Library): "By God, Mr. Palmer, I do not nor cannot understand it."

Yours, etc.,

MARIUS.

THE OFFICERS OF THE A.A.L.

PRESIDENT: J. T. GILLETT, F.L.A. (Willesden).

VICE-PRESIDENT: A. LI. CARVER, A.L.A. (Portsmouth).

HONORARY SECRETARY: E. CAVE, F.L.A. (Central Library, Southampton).

HONORARY TREASURER: E. WISKER, F.L.A. (Public Library, Gillingham, Kent).

HONORARY EDITOR: S. C. HOLLIDAY, F.L.A. (Central Library, Hackney, London, E.8).

HONORARY SOLICITORS: Messrs. METCALFE, COPEMAN & PETTEFAR,
3 and 4 Clement's Inn, London, W.C.2.

OFFICERS OF THE COUNCIL: *Hon. Education Secretary:* Mrs. S. W. MARTIN, Carnegie Library, Herne Hill Road, S.E.24. *Hon. Librarian:* Miss B. F. NEVARD, F.L.A., Carnegie Library, Herne Hill Road, S.E.24. *Hon. Membership Secretary:* Miss W. M. HEARD, A.L.A., Chiswick Public Library, W.4.

Matters relating to Correspondence Course and A.A.L. publications to the Hon. Education Secretary. Orders for THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT, advertisements, etc., to the Hon. Treasurer. Enquiries relating to membership and delivery of THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT to the Hon. Membership Secretary. All other enquiries to the Hon. Secretary.

A.A.L. PUBLICATIONS

THE LIBRARY ASSISTANT.

10s. 6d. per annum, post free.

PHILLIPS: PRIMER OF BOOK CLASSIFICATION. New and enlarged edition, 1946.

7s. (6s. to members) post free.

SAYERS: LIBRARY COMMITTEE, 2nd edition, 1935. 7d. post free.

Obtainable from S. W. MARTIN, A.L.A., Carnegie Library, Herne Hill Road, S.E.24.
